



JOSE HUIZAR
COUNCILMEMBER, 14TH DISTRICT

August 4, 2017

Fanny Pan
Project Manager, Metro
One Gateway Plaza, M/S 99-22-4
Los Angeles, CA 90012

RE: West Santa Ana Branch Scoping Document

Dear Ms. Pan,

I am writing to provide feedback on the West Santa Ana Branch (WSAB) Transit Corridor proposed by Metro.

After reviewing the four alternatives that are being proposed to be carried forward for the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR), I feel that all four alternatives do not adequately address community concerns and environmental issues. We are supportive of a new alternative that provides service to the Arts District and Little Tokyo through a full underground option.

Furthermore, the Notice of Preparation (NOP) states that one of the goals is to *“address mobility and access constraints faced by transit-dependent communities, thereby improving transit equity.”* All four alternatives fail to achieve this goal and will divide existing communities and create barriers to multimodal mobility across the proposed routes.

Additionally, my office has received numerous calls and emails from constituents who are concerned about the four proposed options. To that end, each proposed option fails to meet the needs of the community as outlined below.

Option A - Pacific/Alameda

- The proposed station in the Arts District would require significant right-of-way acquisition just north of 4th Place
- The proposed aerial station in Little Tokyo would have a significant impact to the aesthetics, cultural resources, and traffic of the neighborhood
- Fails to serve the low-income and transit dependent communities along Alameda

- Would be redundant with the Red/Purple Line Extension proposed for 6th Street

Option B - Pacific/Vignes

- Passes under multiple historic bridges
- Does not address the service needs of the Industrial District and Little Tokyo
- Would be redundant with the Red/Purple Line Extension proposed for 6th Street

Option C - Alameda

- Creates a visual and physical barrier along Alameda Street through Downtown
- The proposed aerial station in Little Tokyo would have a significant impact to the aesthetics, cultural resources, and traffic of the neighborhood

Option D - Alameda/Vignes

- Requires significant right-of-way acquisition adjacent to 4th Street/ Alameda Street for the tunnel portal construction and at 3rd Street/Traction Avenue for the proposed Arts District Station
- Aerial station at 7th Street/Alameda Street would cut off the Industrial District from the Arts District

Due to the proposed Red/Purple Line Station at 6th Street, having a route run along Santa Fe Avenue would duplicate service and provide a major gap in the transit network in the Central City East area. A route running along Alameda Street would serve a wider range of people and provide transit access to low-income communities who are transit dependent.

However, the options proposed for Alameda would have a significant impact due to the aerial structure and/or right of way acquisition needed to deliver that option.

Metro must analyze an alternative that runs below grade from 8th Street to Union Station or shares the existing track with the Blue and Gold lines north of the new Little Tokyo/Arts District Station being constructed as part of the Regional Connector Project. This alternative must also include a station that serves the Arts District. Furthermore, any option proposed must meet the following conditions and mitigation measures:

Aesthetics

- Aesthetic treatments along the rail right-of-way that fit the character of the neighborhood and minimize the visual blight of the trains and accompanying infrastructure
- Does not have an aerial station

Cultural Resources

- Does not alter or touch the historic LA River bridges
- Does not alter or touch the Nishi Hongwanji Buddhist Temple
- Does not alter or touch Fukui Mortuary
- Tunnel boring machine should be stationed on Metro property and not on community property

Land Use and Planning

- Minimizes right-of-way acquisition of privately owned properties
- Does not cross over the City of Los Angeles Mangrove property at 1st Street and Alameda
- Facilitates, and does not hinder the Metro/LA County/LA City Union Station/Civic Center Planning Project

Noise

- Ample noise mitigation measures such as sound-absorbing materials are used to prevent noise pollution in the residential neighborhoods the route goes through

Population and Housing

- A business mitigation fund that serves the whole neighborhood and not just businesses immediately adjacent to the project route
- Allowing new businesses the ability to access the business interruption fund instead of just those who have been around more than two years

Transportation and Traffic

- Compatible with a proposed rail or streetcar along 7th Street from 7th Street/Alameda Street to Metro Center
- Construct multimodal infrastructure adjacent to the project stations consistent with Metro's 1st/Last Mile Plan and the City of Los Angeles Mobility Plan and Complete Streets Design Guide
- Mitigates parking loss during construction by providing alternative parking locations or shuttle service to affected communities
- Stations designed to hold four-car trains in order to meet the capacity needs of Downtown Los Angeles

I am glad to see that a transit project of this magnitude is moving forward as it will provide an important link to the gateway cities and Orange County. However, we must not build an option that will disrupt and divide neighborhoods in Downtown and run counter to the mobility philosophy of the City of Los Angeles.

Should you have any questions, please do not to contact Nate Hayward of my office at (323) 383-4906 or Nate.hayward@lacity.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "José Huizar". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

José Huizar
Councilmember, 14th District